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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/NCE MARC NORDBERG

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [HU](#)

SUBJECT: GROWING HUNGARIAN HORDE FROM THE RIGHT - MAGYAR
GARDA ADDS 600 NEW MEMBERS

REF: A. 07 BUDAPEST 1773 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. MCGUIRE-NORDBERG EMAILS

[1](#)1. Repeating their late October 2007 public ceremony (ref A), the far-right, para-military Magyar Garda (Hungarian Guard) initiated 600 new members at Budapest's Heroes' Square on March 29. As the colonnaded statues of the most important historical Hungarian figures over the past 1000 years gazed down upon the fenced-off square, a small contingent of anti-Garda protesters broke through for a short time in the presence of several hundred police officers gathered to maintain the peace. Magyar Garda leader Istvan Dosa once again played the nationalistic card, calling on the membership to "defend Hungary," while former Defense Minister Lajos Fur and Reform Bishop Lorant Hegadus attempted to provide an air of political and religious legitimacy to the event. With this recent induction, the Garda - an off-shoot of the far-right anti-Semitic, anti-Roma Jobbik Party - claims approximately 1500 members.

[1](#)2. In a perhaps related action of Hungarian far-right activists, the center-right FIDESZ party was recently targeted. Following recent press coverage of the party's "open arms" approach designed to appeal to swing voters, two inert hand grenades were placed outside FIDESZ party offices within the past week. The extreme right "Kuruc" website claims responsibility for these two acts, calling upon FIDESZ to "give up your opportunist politics, which serve the Israeli-communisits...the next (device) will deliver death!...we are praying that you will find your way back to the route of the Hungarians." In response to these two threats, Prime Minister Gyurcsany called upon government authorities to take all legal measures to protect public officials, regardless of their party affiliation.

[1](#)3. On March 12, the Budapest City prosecutor initiated a court case against the Magyar Garda based on the group's December marches against "gypsy crime" in villages with large Roma populations. The prosecutor is requesting that the organization be disbanded on the basis of racial discrimination, stressing that the organization violates Roma rights and is incompatible with a country governed by the rule of law. On the opening day of the court case, members of the Garda scuffled outside the courtroom with members of the media in an attempt to limit access to the hearing (ref B). The court adjourned the trial until May 19.

[1](#)4. Comment: With three public events in the past seven months, Magyar Garda's ability to attract public attention, as well as some modicum of support, continues to grow. Dissatisfaction with the current government coalition coupled with a flagging economy, higher inflation and unemployment

rates - and a tendency to blame membership in international organizations such as the European Union - provides the Garda ammunition to "save Hungary for Hungarians." Although all five parliamentary parties reject Jobbik's and Magyar Garda's mantra, FIDESZ still faces the toughest challenge in upcoming elections to appeal to the voters on the right, while at the same time rejecting the populist, nationalistic right-wing message.

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